

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions of claims in the application.

Claims 1-34. (cancelled)

Claim 35. (currently amended) A process for metal deposition comprising:

- (a) providing ~~an aqueous~~ a solution comprising one or more metal activator species;
- (b) contacting a part to be plated with the solution comprising one or more metal activator species, wherein the one or more metal activator species are oxidized to generate hydroxyl species;
- (c) etching the part with reactive hydroxyl species generated from water as a result of presence of the metal activator species in the aqueous solution;
- (d) contacting the part with a solution of reducing agent capable of reducing the metal activator species; and
- (e) metal plating the part by contact with an electroless plating solution;
wherein the metal activator species is one or more agents chosen from silver (II), cobalt (III), ruthenium (V), (VI), (VII), (VIII), cerium (III) or (IV), iron (I) or (III), manganese (IV or higher), rhodium (IV) or vanadium (IV) or (V), and

Claim 36. (previously presented) The process of claim 35 wherein the part is immersed in an aqueous solution comprising one or more metal activator species.

Claim 37. (cancelled)

Claim 38. (previously presented) The process of claim 35 wherein the metal activator is oxidized electrochemically.

Claim 39. (previously presented) The process of claim 35 wherein the metal activator is selected from cobalt (III), ruthenium (V), (VI), (VII), (VIII), cerium (III) or (IV), iron (I) or (III), manganese (IV or higher), rhodium (IV) or vanadium (IV) or (V).

Claim 40. (previously presented) The process of claim 35 wherein the metal activator is silver.

Claim 41. (previously presented) The process of claim 35 wherein the metal activator is cobalt.

Claim 42. (previously presented) The process of claim 35 wherein the part comprises an organic plastic.

Claim 43. (previously presented) The process of claim 35 wherein the part comprises acrylonitrile butadiene styrene, polyamide, epoxy, polycarbonate, or polyetherimide, or blends thereof.